

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

IO-13 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /083 W

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P R 241347Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7653

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY ZANZIBAR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECIN, EWWT, PBOR, KE, TZ

SUBJ: KENYA HANDS OVER 3 LAKE VICTORIA VESSELS TO TANZANIA

REF: DAR ES SALAAM 2206

1. IN MAY 23 CEREMONY IN KISUMU KENYA HANDED OVER 3 LAKE VICTORIA VESSELS (ONE PASSENGER STEAMER, ONE CARGO VESSEL, AND A TANKER) TO TANZANIA. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS THE VESSELS WILL SAIL WITHIN A FEW DAYS FOR MWANZA PORT AND, AFTER REPAIRS, WILL RESUME NORMAL MARINE SERVICES ON LAKE VICTORIA.

2. ACCORDING TO DECEMBER AGREEMENT, TANZANIA IS NOW REQUIRED TO RETURN TO KENYA VEHICLES AND AIRCRAFT WHICH HAD BEEN SEIZED BY TANGOV WHEN THE BORDER WAS CLOSED FEBRUARY 1977. THE ITEMS TO BE RETURNED TO KENYA INCLUDE 30 KENATCO TRUCKS, OVER 60 OTHER VEHICLES (MOST BELONGING TO KENYAN TOUR COMPANIES), AND SOME 30 AIRCRAFT WHICH BELONG TO FIRMS BASED IN KENYA.

3. COMMENT: RELEASE OF THE LAKE STEAMERS REPRESENTS SIGNIFICANT
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FIRST STEP TOWARD EVENTUAL NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. IT REPRESENTS IMPORTANT GESTURE ON THE PART OF THE GOK SINCE VESSELS, WHICH WERE THE MAJOR PHYSICAL ASSETS OF TANZANIA HELD BY THE KENYANS, WERE CONSIDERED TO BE A KEY BARGAINING CHIP FOR GOK. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KENYAN MOVE IS ENHANCED BY THE FACT THAT THE VEHICLES AND AIRCRAFT TO BE RETURNED FROM TANZANIA ARE EXPECTED TO BE

VIRTUALLY WORTHLESS, PROBABLY HAVING BEEN CANNIBALIZED FOR
SPARE PARTS AND UNUSED FOR OVER A YEAR. OPINION HERE IS
THAT RETURN OF VESSELS IS A CLEAR SIGNAL OF GOK'S GENUINE
DESIRE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH NORMALIZATION PROCESS.

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